

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 183700

FOL RPT KHARTOUM 3254 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO USUN NEW YORK
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QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 3
254

DEPT PASS OAU COLLECTIVE

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG OAU XA
SUBJECT: OPENING OF FIFTEENTH OAU SUMMIT

1. WITH THE REST OF MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES I ATTENDED THE
FORMAL OPENING OF THE FIFTEENTH OAU SUMMIT LAST NIGHT JULY 18.
PROCEEDINGS TOOK FOUR AND ONE-HALF HOURS. CHAIRS IN VISITORS'
GALLERY WERE FAIRLY COMFORTABLE AT FIRST BUT GREW PROGRESSIVELY
HARDER AS EVENING WORE ON.

2. CHIEFS OF STATE UPON ARRIVAL AT FRIENDSHIP HALL WERE TAKEN
TO A ROOM BEHIND CHAIRMAN'S DAIS WHILE FONMINS AND OTHER
MEMBERS OF DELEGATIONS WENT DIRECTLY TO THEIR ALLOCATED SEATS.
SOLE EXCEPTION WAS TANZANIA'S NYERERE WHO ENTERED WITH
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HIS DELEGATION AND SAT QUIETLY WITH THEM FROM OUTSET. AFTER A
SUITABLE INTERVAL THE CHIEFS OF STATE ENTERED THE ROOM ONE BY
ONE (IT REMINDED ME A LITTLE BIT OF A BUSBY BERKLEY MANEUVER
IN A 1930'S MUSICAL FILM). ONLY TWO LEADERS TO RECEIVE
SIGNIFICANT OVATION UPON ENTRY WERE ALGERIA'S BOUMEDDIENE
AND EGYPT'S SADAT. I AND MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES AS WELL
AS SUDANESE VISITORS DID OUR BEST TO MAKE SURE THAT SADAT'S

CLAUQUE WAS NOISIEST. WE SUCCEEDED. UGANDA'S IDI AMIN GRACED THE PROCEEDINGS ATTIRED IN AN AIR MARSHAL'S UNIFORM WITH A PISTOL ON HIS HIP.

3. THE FLOOR WAS FULL OF PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO WERE APPARENTLY PERMITTED TO ROAM AT WILL. SADAT AGAIN WAS THE CYNOSURE OF MOST OF THEM BUT BOUMEDDIENE RECEIVED ENOUGH CLOSE-UP CAMERA ATTENTION TO MAKE HIM LOOK QUITE UNCOMFORTABLE.

4. THIS WAS, WE ARE TOLD, BEST ATTENDED OAU SUMMIT IN HISTORY. THIRTY HEADS OF STATE AND FOUR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WERE PRESENT. THIS IN MANY WAYS IS PROBABLY A GOOD THING. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOMETHING LIKE A VARIATION OF GRESHAM'S LAW TAKES PLACE WITH SO MANY LUMINARIES ASSEMBLE UNDER ONE ROOF. AS THEIR NUMBERS INCREASE, THEIR CHARISMA DECLINES.

5. PROCEEDINGS WERE ORDERLY AND DIGNIFIED. SPEAKERS WERE: NIMEIRI (KEYNOTED), TOLBERT (REPLYING FOR ANGLOPHONES), KOUNTCHE (REPLYING FOR FRANCOPHONES), MUGABE (REPLYING FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS), WALDHEIM (USUAL SELF-SERVING DRIVEL), BONGO (FAREWELL ADDRESS), AND NIMEIRI (PICKING UP THE TORCH). SADAT LEFT AFTER NIMEIRI'S FIRST SPEECH. SUMMARIES OF SPEECHES BEING SENT SEPTEL..

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6. CHIEFS OF STATE AND FOREIGN MINISTERS THEN REPAIRED TO ADJOINING BANQUET FOR USUAL SUMPTUOUS SUDANESE FARE. THE REST OF US WENT HOME AND HAD A DRINK. BERGUS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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